

INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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COUNTRY	USSR (Kazakh SSR)	REPORT	
SUBJECT	Reception of, and Comments on, Foreign Broadcasts in Kazakh SSR, <i>jammings, prices of radio receivers.</i>	DATE DISTR.	17 April 1958
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report concerning reception of, and comments on, foreign broadcasts in the Kolkhoz imeni Michurina. Alma Ata Oblast. Kazakh SSR

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The short-wave band was from 25 to 76 meters, the medium from 200 to 450, and the long from 600 to 2000 meters.

2. Most of the people [redacted] possessed radios of the Meskvich make, equipped with medium and long-waves, and a few had ReKerd sets. In addition to these two types, some residents of Alma Ata possessed radio sets of the following makes: Ural, Baltika, Zvezda, and Chayka. These sets all had the three wave lengths.

[redacted] the Ural set cost approximately 750 to 1000 rubles, the Zvezda over 800 rubles, the Chayka over 800 rubles, the Baltika 670 or 750 rubles, and the Meskvich 180 rubles.

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Only administrative personnel and some stakhanovites in the kolkhozes and various engineers, technicians, foremen, and government employees in the towns are able to buy radio receiving sets that are better than ReKord. The most popular is undoubtedly the Moskvich. [redacted] there were approximately 800 families of kolkhoz members. Of these, approximately 30 had radio receiving sets. They were: the Kolkhoz President and his Deputy, several brigadiers, accountants, storekeepers, and a very few kolkhozniki. The majority of the sets were of the Moskvich make, but some had sets of the Ural, ReKord, or similar manufacture. A large number of the remaining families had only wired loud speakers in their homes and received broadcasts solely from the kolkhoz radio center (radio uzel) located close to the kolkhoz school building. The percentage of radio receiving sets in Alma Ata was larger [redacted]

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3. No license was necessary to own a radio receiving set. However, all radio receivers had to be registered with the authorities. [redacted]

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[redacted] the registration was made at the kolkhoz communication section (otdeleniye svyazi). The monthly fee for my ReKord receiving set was five rubles. A larger fee was imposed on larger sets. [redacted]

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[redacted] the "informal" restrictions were strict and it was common knowledge that the Militia and other territorial MVD organizations persecuted people caught or denounced for listening to any foreign broadcasts. [redacted]

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[redacted] there were many rumors to
this effect [redacted] in the town of Alma Ata.

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4. [redacted] several occasions where radio receivers were
confiscated and the owners arrested for listening to foreign broadcasts.
These cases were usually related without the mentioning of any names [redacted]

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5. [redacted] there were many rumors that some people
in various localities of the Soviet Union were arrested for listening to
foreign broadcasts . As far as these rumors went, it was the Militia and
territorial MVD authorities who were responsible for detection of persons
listening to foreign broadcasts. Such persons were usually discovered and
caught through the gossip of neighbors or through MVD informers.

6. [redacted] The only democratic
programs [redacted] were those from Tashkent which
transmitted Uzbek and Azerbaijani^{zh} music and songs.

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7. Members of my kolkhoz preferred musical broadcasts to news broad-
casts. [redacted]

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8. The first foreign broadcast [redacted] in the Soviet Union was a
short-wave VOA broadcast from Washington in the Iranian language. This was

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[redacted] [redacted] caught Radio
Tehran again on the short-wave. Eventually, [redacted] BBC in London on
short-wave in the Iranian language. The broadcasts from Tehran were not
jammed at all and [redacted] quite clearly. Foreign broadcasts in
non-Russian languages were jammed to a certain extent but were still under-
standable. Foreign broadcasts in the Russian language were jammed so
strongly that it was possible to understand no more than a few words. How-
ever, even in that case, the introductory part could be heard quite clearly.
The sentences: "Here is Washington. You are listening to the VOA. We
transmit the news." were very seldom jammed. The jamming, however, was not
of a constant intensity and a few words could be understood between jamming
periods. [redacted] Washington Russian language broadcasts on the
medium-wave lengths, 238 meters, were not jammed as much as these on short-
wave.

9. There was no efficient way of overcoming the jamming. Slightly
better listening results could be achieved by adjusting the tone as low as
possible, but it helped very little.

[redacted]
[redacted] information from foreign broadcasts
very soon gets around to people who do not ordinarily listen. [redacted] a few
friends [redacted] usually communicated news received from foreign broadcasts.
[redacted] they passed it on to their friends and so very soon everybody
except for a few distrusted persons knew about it. On several occasions [redacted]

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[redacted] the Kolkhoz President and his associates discussing in subdued voices the information received from foreign broadcasts. [redacted]

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[redacted] Communist Party members themselves listen to foreign broadcasts,

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although they probably disapprove of them. It is difficult to say what

percentage of the people [redacted] believed that the information received

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from foreign broadcasts was correct. It should be kept in mind that a

large number of people [redacted] probably throughout the Soviet

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Union, are not at all interested in politics or in any news that does not

affect them directly and personally. Outside of these people, who made up

by far the largest group, there were two other groups: those who wanted to

believe, and those who did not. [redacted] intensified foreign broad-

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casts and adequate programs could find a large number of new adherents among

the first-mentioned group, whereas the reindoctrination of those who a priori

do not believe in foreign broadcasts would be much more difficult but in no

way impossible. This last group consists of the majority of communist party

members and various leading and responsible authorities and officials. It

is quite understandable that people receiving information from foreign

broadcasts try to check it. The only available means for doing so is through

Soviet broadcasts and newspapers. Although the interpretation and sometimes

even the facts from foreign and Soviet sources differ considerably, at times

it is not hard to compare both versions and get the truth. [redacted]

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13. [redacted] the President [redacted] and the manager

of the kolkhoz cooperative store (sel'skoye potrebitel'skoye obshchestvo

Sel PQ), both party members, used to listen to foreign broadcasts. [redacted]

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14. [] in general foreign broadcasts are helpful to our

cause and harmful to the Soviet regime. The efforts the Soviet Government

makes to jam these broadcasts are the best proof of this. [] personally

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preferred to listen to Washington VOA broadcasts in the Iranian language,

but considered all of them (Washington, Tehran, BBC) reliable. []

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[] the most efficient and popular is the VOA from Washington because

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it transmitted broadcasts in all USSR and other foreign languages.

15. [] preferred to listen to straight news commentaries

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in order to get the true picture of the international situation. Reports

dealing with UN sessions and speeches of foreign representatives which

were given very little, if any, space in Soviet newspapers were of particular

interest [] From these broadcasts [] learned of Soviet

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intervention in Korea and China, although the Soviet press persistently

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claimed the neutrality of the Soviet Union. []

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16. [] no instances where official ~~notice was~~ taken of foreign

broadcasts in the Soviet press, governmental decrees, or similar organs,

nor of any case of Soviet authorities attempting to rebut any specific item

presented by these broadcasts. Practically every day Soviet citizens are

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able to compare news received through foreign broadcasts with news printed

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in Soviet newspapers and broadcast from local stations. The one-sided

presentation of discussions in the UN, the war situation in Korea and China,

the excellent economic conditions in the satellite countries and the

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[redacted] #

disastrous economic situation in the countries of western democracy could be easily checked in comparing them with information received through foreign broadcasts. In this regard, foreign broadcasts are the only means through which the Soviet people can learn the truth. [redacted] had faith in foreign broadcasts and certainly did not have in the Soviet press.

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17. The majority of the population in the area [redacted] were Kazakhs. Whereas political news was of considerable interest to various foreigners and Russians living in this area, the Kazakh population would probably prefer broadcasts given in their native language and dealing with the economic conditions of Kazakhstan prior to the Soviet regime, at present, and in the future when the Soviet regime has been abolished. In the same way, broadcasts refreshing their national consciousness, their glorious past as distinct from their present subjugation in the USSR would, [redacted] be very appealing to the Kazakhs. [redacted]

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18. By and large [redacted] the radio is an effective medium for reaching the Soviet people. [redacted] do not know of any other medium that might be more effective than radio.

19. The daily time of the VOA broadcasts (2015 hours Alma Ata local time) was very convenient. The Tehran broadcast was received in Alma Ata at 2100 to 2130, which was also convenient. The 2100 BBC also. The convenient daily time for listening to foreign broadcasts is normally from 2000 to 2400 hours. [redacted]

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[redacted] The general pattern of listening was to close all doors and windows and to tune the set to room volume. A lookout was usually posted on the street to warn a listener of any unexpected visitors.

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20. The most important effect of foreign programs is the feeling they communicate to the Soviet people that their country and they ~~are~~ themselves have not been forgotten and written off by the West. Also important is the unavoidable conclusion drawn by the listeners of the superiority of democratic ideology and system over that of the USSR.

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